



Nevada Industry Recognized Credentials Blueprint: Increasing Credential Attainment in the New Nevada Labor Market

2017-2018



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR BRIAN SANDOVAL

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WHAT IS A CREDENTIAL?

A credential can be an educational diploma or degree, occupational state license, certification from industry or professional association, certificate or examination. The term credentials is often used in the labor-market and used as evidence of individuals gaining the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to be successful for employment.

	CERTIFICAT	CERTIFICATION	DEGREE	LICENSE
AWARDED BY...	Education Institution	Business, trade associations,	Educati on	Government Agency
RESULTS FROM...	Course of Study	Assessment	Course of Study	Meeting Requirements
INDICATES...	Education	Skill Mastery	Education	Legal Permission
COMPLETED IN...	>2 Years	Variable	2+ Years	Variable
MAINTAINED BY...	N/A	Skill practice, re-	N/A	Re-application, continuing
EXAMPLE...	ServSafe Food Handler, Green Manufacturing Specialist, Certificate in Business	Certified Welder (CW), Certified Logistics Technician (CLT), Certified International Information Systems Security Professional	Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, Doctor of Engineering	Registered Nurse (RN), Cosmetologist, Master Plumber

**Source: Association for Career and Technical Education*

Characteristics of quality credentials

Credentials are not valued equally. However, there are common characteristics of high-quality credentials:

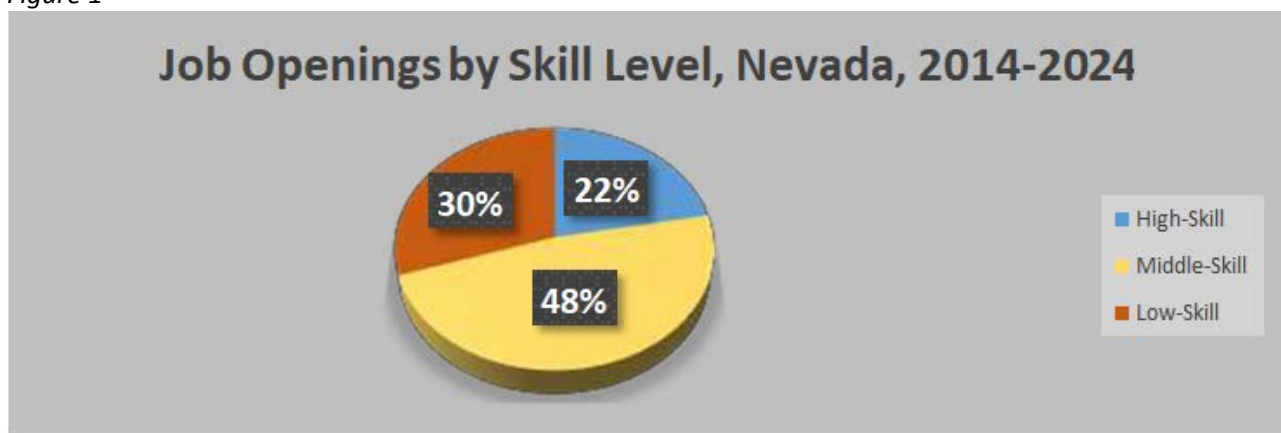
- **Industry-recognized** – companies within an industry accepts the credential as evidence of skills gained and supports improved employmentprospects
- **Labor Market Value** – Credential is valued by employers or industry; credential addresses economic needs; and linked to a demand-driven occupation in the state
- **Stackable** – individuals are able to build on previous skills and attain additional credentials along a given continuum or careerpath
- **Portable** – the credential is recognized across regions, states, and in some instances across countries
- **Quality/Accredited** – the institution providing the credential is in good standing; meets national quality standards; and third partyvalidated
- **Aligned:** Credential is linked to a Career and Technical Education program of study

WHY ARE CREDENTIALS IMPORTANT?

The changing labor-market calls for significantly increasing the number of Nevadans with industry-recognized credentials and education and training beyond high school. Not only do employers express concern about finding adequate replacements as their current workforce ages, but the significant growth in emerging industries in Nevada requires individuals to attain industry-recognized credentials to be successful in today's labor market.

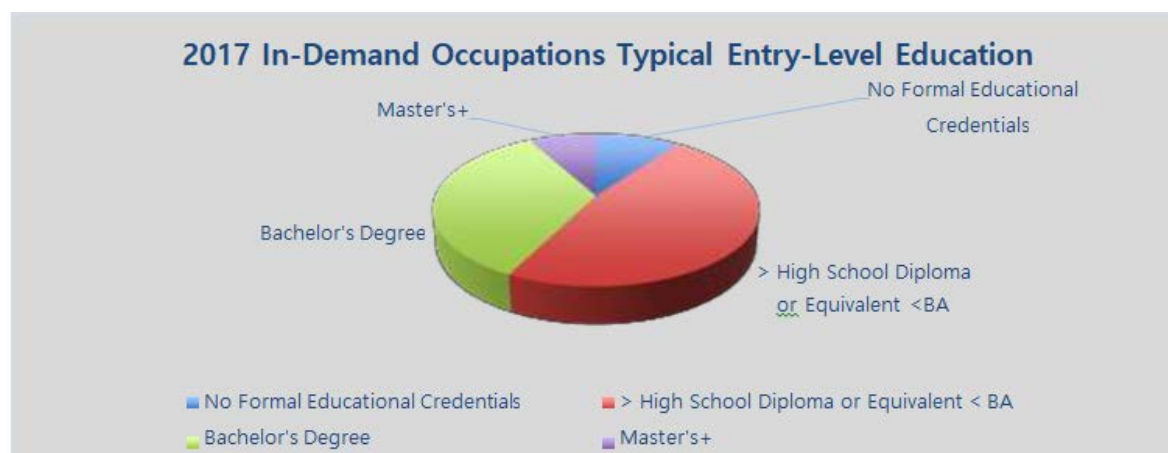
For example, according to research and data from the [National Skills Coalition](#), 51% of all jobs in Nevada in 2015 were middle-skilled jobs. Middle-skilled jobs require education beyond a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree. By 2024, 48% of all jobs will be middle-skilled and 22% will be high-skilled as seen in figure 1.

Figure 1



Furthermore, as seen in figure 2, a strong case can be made for increasing credential attainment in Nevada when examining the typical entry-level education of only the 2017 [targeted industries](#) of the Governor's strategic priorities. Approximately 47% of the in-demand occupations are middle-skilled and 34% are high-skilled, all of which requires credentials beyond a high school diploma. Only 10% of the occupations require no formal education.

Figure 2



Attaining an industry-recognized credential verifies that individuals have the qualifications, competency, skills, and knowledge to be successful in the labor market. Industry-recognized credentials not only add value to students' transcript for college and careers, but will increase job opportunities available to students in their career pathways.

Is state support for industry-recognized credentials new?

Many high-performing states have been leveraging industry-recognized credentials for years. There are a number of states that leverage industry-recognized credentials and even provide incentives to students in various forms. Those states are Florida, Kansas, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Colorado, Virginia, Minnesota, South Carolina, and North Carolina. In fact, the state of Florida has had tremendous success for years and the state of Virginia has been leveraging industry-recognized credential for almost 15 years. Data from [Virginia's Department of Education](#) shows that during the 2009-2010 school year, 29,057 students earned some form of credentials (i.e. occupational competency skills, state license, industry certification, or workplace readiness) and by 2013-2014, 103,599 students earned some form of credentials.

Legal authority

[Senate Bill 516](#), passed by the 79th legislature and signed into law by Governor Sandoval in 2017 establishes the [Office of Workforce Innovation for a New Nevada](#) (OWINN). Section 20 (d) directs OWINN, in consultation with the Governor's Workforce Development Board to "...identify industry-recognized credentials, workforce development programs and education..." The [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) also gives priority consideration to training that leads to industry-recognized credentials. Furthermore, AB 7, also passed during the 79th legislative session, provides for the state board of education to adopt regulations that prescribe the criteria for a pupil to receive a college and career ready high school diploma; and, provides for the state board of education to prescribe the criteria for a pupil to obtain a college-ready endorsement and/or a career-ready endorsement on his/her diploma that is established so that it is recognized and valued by industries and postsecondary educational institutions.

CREDENTIALING REVIEW PROCESS & FRAMEWORK

Objective: OWINN seeks to identify industry-recognized credentials that meet national quality standards, are recognized by third parties, support improved employment prospects, and have market value. While a credential does not guarantee employment the state's vetted list of credentials will help protect students and adults transitioning into the workforce from poor quality credentials and promote credentials that can assist Nevadans in securing employment by providing evidence of skills and information on entry points into relevant industries. A handful of states already leverage a statewide list of industry-recognized credentials, but the vetting process are typically not as rigorous or include industry input. The statewide credentialing list will focus on entry level certifications, certificates, and examinations.

Target Audience: entry level certifications or certificates that secondary students or adults transitioning into the workforce should prioritize (i.e., young adults, veterans, adult education, etc.).

Project Phase: There are thousands of credentials that can be reasonably considered. However, in order to manage the process and align to the immediate needs of the workforce community, Nevada will first seek to prioritize the identification of entry-level certifications and certificates that fall within Nevada's statewide targeted eight industries identified by the Governor's Office and the Governor's Workforce Development Board. Many young adults or adults transitioning into the workforce need initial guidance regarding where they should begin.

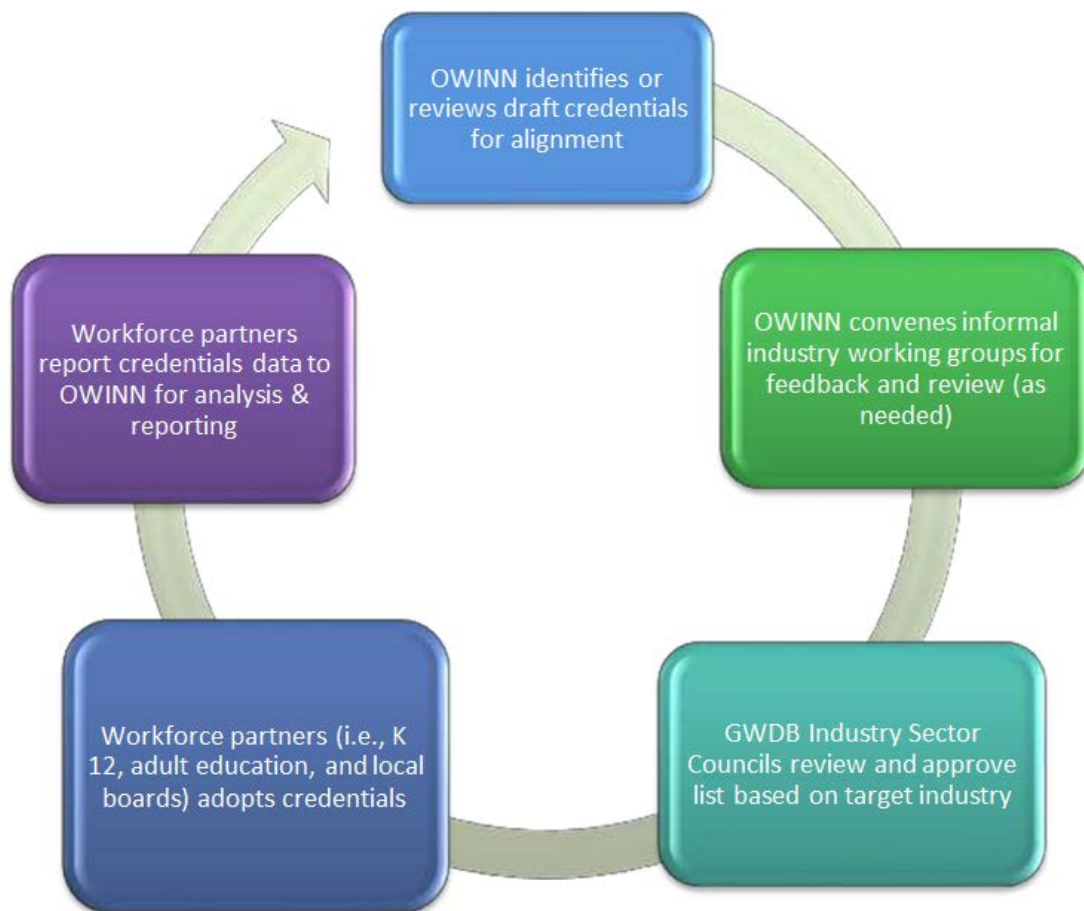
Phase 2 of the credentialing review process will examine mid-level certifications. There will be a deeper emphasis on alignment with priority occupations. The State's Governor's Workforce Development Board Industry Sector Councils and employer working groups will play a critical role in identifying industry recognized credentials. Credentials will be reviewed annually and can be added or taken off based on the Council's input and OWINN's determination.

Nevada's Targeted Industries: *Information Technology; *Health Care and Medical Services; *Manufacturing and Logistics; Aerospace and Defense; Natural Resources; Construction, Mining and Materials; and Tourism, Gaming, and Entertainment. (*denotes high priority industries)

Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB): The mission of the GWDB is to bring Nevada business and workers together to shape strategies that best meet the workforce needs in order to foster a healthy and growing economy in the state. At least 51% of the state board's membership is representative of businesses.

Industry Sector Councils: The mission of the GWDB Industry Sector Councils is to convene representatives of Nevada business, education, and labor in order to facilitate data-driven recommendations concerning sector-specific workforce needs and challenges that will help guide State workforce development efforts. There are eight targeted industry sectors. The Sector Councils are made up of a majority of businesses/employers.

CREDENTIALING REVIEW PROCESS



****At times, OWINN will approve additional credentials outside of this process based on research, labor-market data, or industry input as it seeks to prioritize the elimination of Nevada’s skills gap and respond to urgent workforce gaps in various industries.***

*WIOA gives priority consideration to training that leads to industry-recognized credentials.

H.R. 803 – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

(v) Additional information.—Priority

consideration shall, consistent with clause (i), be given to programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved.

STATE OF NEVADA CREDENTIALS RECOGNITION - QUALITY CRITERIA

There are hundreds of credentials in the education and workforce ecosystem. Because there is a low barrier to entry for organizations who create credentials, individuals can often be misled or get lost in the credentialing world. More importantly, organizations with credentials that may not lead to employment, not valued by employers, or overly costly can often successfully market and take advantage of vulnerable individuals and families. The goal of instituting quality criteria for statewide credentialing recognition is to protect students from poor quality credentials and promote quality credentials that can assist in securing employment by identifying those that meet national quality standards, are recognized by third parties, support improved employment prospects, and have market value.

At a minimum, assessments or credentials must:

1. Be standardized and graded independently of a school in which the test is given;
2. Be knowledge or skill based;
3. Be administered on a multistate or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program

In addition, if an organizations wishes to include a credential on the state list that was not identified by industry of having labor market value, the issuing organization must have sufficient information on their website for OWINN to answer the quality criteria defined below. Otherwise, organizations will need to provide OWINN with evidence for a credential to be on the state list.

QUALITY CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
Legal Status, Structure, and Authority a) The certification body must be a legal entity or part of a legal entity to ensure that it is responsible for its certification activities and has the sole authority for its certification decisions.	Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or other evidence of being a legal entity.
Non-Discrimination a) Policies and procedures must be in place to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all applicants.	Documentation of policies and procedures that demonstrate commitment to fair and equitable treatment (e.g., non- discrimination policies).
b) Policies and procedures must be in place for evaluating requests for reasonable accommodation for verified disability, and granting accommodations as appropriate.	Documentation of policies and procedures for verifying, and as appropriate, providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
Financial Stability a) The certification body must attest that its financial resources are adequate to maintain the stability of the operations of the certification activities.	An attestation statement signed by the CEO or CFO of the certification body that the financial resources are adequate to maintain the stability of the operations of the certification activities.

QUALITY CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
Confidentiality and Public Information a) Information obtained throughout the certification process must be kept confidential and only released with the written consent of the individual. Where there are contracts with other bodies, procedures	Documentation of policies and procedures used to ensure information obtained throughout the certification process is kept confidential. Sample confidentiality agreements with
Recertification a) The certification body must require recertification based on defined criteria and intervals and documented procedure(s) for implementing the recertification process in accordance with the	Policies and procedures for recertification must be submitted.

**OWINN reserves the right to include additional quality criteria before including a credential on its list. OWINN also reserves the right to remove a credential from the state's priority list at any time if credible information undermines the credibility of the issuing organization.*

Industry Credentialing Interest Request Form

Return Form to jfinlay@gov.nv.gov

Credential Source Information	
Date of Submission	
Credential Title/Name (Complete official name)	
Name of Credential Body/Organization	
Scope/Purpose of Credential	
Geographic Scope	
Assurance Body	
Date Credential Was First Issued	
Web Site URL Address	
Contact Information (Name, Telephone, and E-Mail Address)	

Credential Contractor Information	
Contractor Company Name (Company managing the credential if different from)	
Contact Information (Include email, website and phone)	

Test Administration	
Test Site (School, Online, or Offsite, with details)	
Teaching Aids? (Pre-test, study guide or blueprint available)	List all available:
Details on accessing Teaching Aids	
Please indicate: Number of test items	
Time allowed (minutes)	
Passing score (Percentage)	
Cost	
Is the instructor allowed to take this test?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Additional information to assist in determining suitability of credential	
Are special accommodations for student test takers allowed? Please specify:	

**In some instances, OWINN may request additional information from issuing organization*

REPORTING

Annually, OWINN will report relevant data from agencies to better understand the progress the state of Nevada is making and to highlight the state's success based on these variables:

- Types of credentials
- Credentials attempted
- Credentials passed
- Credentials not passed
- Additional relevant information which may help the state better plan for Nevada's workforce

About OWINN: *The Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation (OWINN) helps drive a skilled, diverse, and aligned workforce in the state of Nevada by promoting collaboration and cooperation among all entities focused on workforce development. OWINN works to address Nevada's workforce needs by leveraging labor-market data, scaling career pathways that leads to industry-recognized credentials, expanding apprenticeships, and designing responsive workforce policies.*